

Effect of Being a Student-Athlete on GPA

Problem

When we watch our favorite college sports teams most of us probably don't think about the players' grades or how they are effected by the decision they made to play collegiate sports. From what I have heard people say they seem to think that college athletes either have a somewhat higher GPA or a much lower GPA than students who are not athletes. How does being a student-athlete effect your GPA? This problem is important because student athletes deserve the same time to succeed as other students but they do not get the same amount of time to complete work. When students do not get the same time to finish their work compared to other students it can have a negative effect on their grades. I will use information from two other studies, one done the NCAA on division two athletes and another study published by the Kapherd Journal on behavioral data and testing scores.

Background

Two of the studies I gathered information from looked at similar aspects of student-athletes' lives that have effects on their GPA's. Both of these studies found similar information in the fact that student-athletes face additional factors that can limit their academic success. The study published in the Kapherd Journal stated that "Participants academic performance (GPA) was found to positively correlate with the time spent in classes and studying and negatively correlated with the time spent in competition and practice and leisure activities." (Steven Chen, Nicholas Mason, Steven Middleton, William Salazar 1) This means that athletes have a factor in their academic careers that non student-athletes do not have which could have an effect on their academic performance. This factor is shown in the study done by the

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NCAA on division 2 athletes. The study states “Generally the Academic performance of student-athletes was shown to be better outside the season of competition than in season.” (Brianna M. Scott, Thomas S. Paskur, Michael Miranda, Todd A. Petr, John J. McArdle 1) This shows that student athletes face an additional problem in achieving their desired academic performance than non-student athletes because they have to deal with the time commitment of competing and practicing in the sport they play.

In the study published in the Kapherd Journal the authors indicated that “For the student-athletes there were as many or more hours recorded spent practicing and competing as there were recorded hours spent in class and study time. From this statement I can infer that being a student-athlete leaves less time than a non-student athlete to study and go to class. This fact also makes me wonder if there were more hours spent practicing and competing than there was studying wouldn’t their grades only be negatively impacted?

In the other study I looked at done by the NCAA on division 2 athletes I thought it was an interesting note that they found “D-II student athletes tended to take less credit hours during season and had a drop in GPA in the high-profile sports such as football, basketball and baseball.” (Brianna M. Scott, Thomas S. Paskur, Michael Miranda, Todd A. Petr, John J. McArdle 6) I thought this was interesting because from the other studies I looked at they did not list credit hours taken. This is important because if they are taking less credit hours than a non-student athlete the GPA can be skewed in their favor if they are being compared to a non-student athlete.

I wondered if the athletes at Bloomsburg faced similar challenges as the participants in the studies I read. Do Bloomsburg’s athletes face negative effects on their GPA or are they facing the exact same challenges as non-student athletes?

Method

To answer my question and find out if Bloomsburg's athletes face negative effects on their GPA or if they face the exact same challenges as non-student athletes I interviewed two student-athletes that attend Bloomsburg University. Of the two people I interviewed there is one football player and one baseball player I chose this because of the different times of the year that games and practices usually are held. I asked both of the participants the same questions to see if different sports had different effects on the schedules of the players.

Findings

The first person I interviewed was a student who plays football for Bloomsburg University. I based my questions off of what the results showed for the studies I looked at such as time spent in class during season vs. out season, hours spent studying per week, and hours of practice per week.(introduce) The first person I interviewed said that he went to every class during the season and also went to every class out of season. He answered that he studied 3 hours per week and also had 8 hours of practice per week.(insert) This stood out to me because I felt like this person was not the norm for student athletes based on the studies I looked at because he went to every class in and out of season.(interpret)

The next person I interviewed plays baseball for Bloomsburg University and I thought it was important to list the differences between the two people I interviewed schedules.(introduce) He answered that he does not go to every class during the season of his sport but he does go to every class when he is out of season. He also responded that he studies 12 hours a week and goes to practice or does sports related things for 14 hours a week.(insert) I thought this was interesting because this person seemed to fit the description of what the studies were saying because he stated that he doesn't go to every class during the sport season but he does go to every class out of the sport season.(interpret)

Conclusion

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Based on the research I did and the interviews I did the effects on academic performance by being a student-athlete at Bloomsburg seem to be the same effects that student-athletes across the nation face in their academic careers. From the interviews I conducted I compared them to the studies done by the NCAA on division two athletes which somewhat confirmed the studies because a student I interviewed matched completely with the results given in the study and another student was only a little bit different than the results the study gave.

To me I think this proves that student-athletes do face an additional factors on achieving their desired academic performance, but it also showed that if they manage their time better than they would have to if they did not play a sport they can still achieve their goals.

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Chen, Steve, Nicholas Mason, Steven Middleton, and William Salazar. "An Examination of Behavioral Data and Testing Scores as Indicators of Student Athletes' Academic Success." *Kapherd Journal* 51.134/135 (2013): 1-2. Web.

Scott, Brianna M., Thomas S. Paskur, Michael Miranda, Todd A. Petr, and John J. McArdle. "In-Season vs. out of Season Academic Performance of College Student-Athletes." *Journal of Intercollegiate Sports* (2008): 1+. Web.